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ABSTRACT

This practicum was designed to enhance methods and procedures used with 15 low-achieving, disinterested, and disruptive seventh grade students assigned to a middle school's alternative education program. The primary goal of the practicum was to increase students' responsibility for their own actions and their attention to learning. A secondary goal was to increase parent support and involvement with their child and the school. To achieve these purposes, a programmed behavior management system, called the Student Help and Reinforcement Program (SHARP), which included the use of reinforcement agents and motivational techniques, was developed and implemented during a 12-week period. Employing reinforcement agents and motivational techniques, the program involved treatment contracts, home contingency contracts, daily report cards, and homework records. Results indicated that a systematic behavior management approach incorporating positive reinforcement techniques and parental involvement can be effective in reducing inappropriate behavior and improving academic achievement. Fifteen appendices contain the questionnaire and related materials. (Author/RH)

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Center for the
Advancement of Education
Ed.D. Program

Improving Achievement, Behavior, and Parent Involvement for Middle School Students Through a Behavior Management Program

by

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Improving Achievement, Behavior, and Parent Involvement for Middle School Students Through a Behavior Management Program

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STANLEY D. ANDERSON

Cluster XXII

A Practicum I Report Presented to the Ed.D Program
in Early and Middle Childhood
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

1987

PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

Verifier: Nick Gancitano
Nick Gancitano

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Fort Lauderdale, Florida
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June 15, 1987
Date

This practicum report was submitted by Stanley D. Anderson under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

7-30-87.
Date of Final Approval of Report

JoEllen Salce Rogers, Ph.D.,
Adviser

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ABSTRACT

Improving Achievement, Behavior, and Parent Involvement for Middle School Students Through a Behavior Management Program. Anderson, Stanley D., 1987: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood. Descriptors: Academic Achievement/Alternative School/Behavior/Contracts/Middle School Education/Parent Child Relationship/Parent Participation/Parent School Relationship/Token Reward System.

This practicum was designed to enhance the methodology and procedures used with students that were identified as having behavioral problems and classified academically deficient. The primary goal of the program was to encourage the students to become more responsible for their own actions and to apply themselves in a learning environment. A secondary goal was to develop a higher rate of parent support and involvement with the child and the school.

The writer sent an evaluative questionnaire to 7 middle school principals; developed the Student Help and Reinforcement Program (SHARP); consulted with the principal; assisted in the selection of a teacher that would be effective in meeting the needs of the students; conducted inservicing of the teacher and administrator about the components of the program; planned and conducted parent meetings; provided necessary forms with guidance in completing them; supervised and maintained the program; and developed and administered an evaluation component.

The results of the practicum were positive. Analysis of the data revealed that students with involved parents experience a greater advancement in their academic, behavior, and attendance ratings as compared to those with non-involved parents. The results further indicate that a school reinforcement system alone is less effective as compared to a combination of a school-home reinforcement system. Feedack from the regular classroom teachers praised the program because a carryover to their classes by the participating students was taking place. Likewise, involved parents were pleased with the outcomes of their children, and expressed their desire to have the program continued.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The community where this practicum was conducted can best be described as a metropolitan area having a population of 1.2 million people. There is a large segment of retirees in the area, but the families with school-age children bring to the school system an estimated 130,000 pupils for the 1986-1987 school year.

The school system, located in the southeastern part of the United States, is rated as the "Nation's largest fully accredited school system," having a total of 176 schools and 7,104 teachers employed. It is considered to be the county's largest employer with about 13,300 permanent employees, and operates on a budget of $776 million. During the school year of 1985-1986 there was an estimated expenditure of $2,684 per student.

The activity of the practicum took place in a middle school that has a school population of approximately 1,400 students. The racial mix of the students is fifty-eight percent white, forty percent black, and two percent other (Spanish, Oriental, Indian).

The socio-economic strata of the student population

ranges from very wealthy to poverty stricken. The students that qualified to participate in the practicum program were accepted irregardless of their socio-economic standing, or their race.

Target Population

The students involved in the program consisted of seventh graders that were identified as low achieving, disinterested, and disruptive students. The classifications of these students were based upon placement test results, past performance, short attention span, and poor conduct.

1. Type of Student
    a. Below grade level.
    b. Poor grades.
    c. Poor attendance.
    d. Poor background in basic study areas - for example, phonics, mathematics skills, and spelling.
    e. Any student who has been retained at the end of the previous school year or summer session.
    f. Any student who at the end of the second grading period has not achieved 50% of the actual grade level minimum basic skills in reading, writing, or mathematics.

g. Any student who has demonstrated either disruptive behavior or insufficient involvement within the regular classroom setting which causes his/her own or others' lack of progress.

h. Any student who is identified as significantly below anticipated achievement in reading, language, or mathematics on the county's standardized test program.

These children exhibit a poor self-image and the need for attention through their disruptive and aggressive behavior. They generally come from the lower socio-economic strata, and from families with non-supportive parents in the child's efforts to succeed at school. Also, eighty percent of this group represented the black race, fifteen percent came from the caucasian race, and five percent were from other races.

Author's Work Setting and Role

The author is a social studies curriculum specialist in one of the three areas in which the school district is divided. In this defined area, it is required that school visitations be conducted on a regular basis to elementary, middle, and high schools to review the social studies program being taught, and whether it meets district requirements.

To effectively enhance the social studies curriculum

the author has the responsibility of providing for and conducting teacher workshops and inservice meetings, and developing and implementing social studies programs that are in compliance with the school district directives.

Coordination of, and encouragement of schools to participate in the annual social studies academic games and social studies fair come under the realm of the curriculum specialist. This task requires public speaking before parent and teacher groups to provide them with updated information about rules, topics, and procedures.

Another very important responsibility is serving on the county textbook adoption committee. This committee earmarks four different textbooks per grade level from the list of state adopted texts for social studies teachers to vote for. Majority votes will determine the social studies textbooks to be used in the school district.

The author has served on a recent evaluation of the social studies curriculum. This task required the curriculum specialist to provide in-put about the strengths and weaknesses of the social studies program, together with recommendations, if needed, to improve the curriculum.

The author is also responsible for developing articulation between the middle schools and their elementary feeder schools. Assistance is provided to fifth and sixth grade teachers in setting goals, developing action plans, establishing accountability, and estimating cost impact.

Chapter II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Students are not Meeting Standards for Graduation

Everyday one may look at the newspaper and read about the staggering failure rate of students unable to earn the required number of credits that would make them eligible to receive their high school diplomas. This is a serious problem that must be addressed before these students ever reach the high school level, and well on their way to becoming a "drop-outs" or "turned-off" individuals.

Florida legislators, who previously focused on the much publicized quest for excellence, have come to recognize the magnitude of the problem of students at the bottom of the class.

Last session, legislators adopted the Dropout Prevention Act, which would make more options for alternative education available to unsuccessful and unmotivated students, as well as for those who have problems with pregnancy or drugs. Currently, alternative education is used mostly to isolate students with disciplinary problems from other students.

Problem Description

Students that were assigned to the alternative education program were not demonstrating positive changes in either their behavior or attitude. Examination of the test

results of these students indicated that their academic performance was deficient and that they were not making satisfactory progress under current teaching methodologies. There appeared to be a lack of motivation and ambition to improve their standing in the eyes of others, or to apply the principles taught in a lesson. These students experienced very little, if any, parental involvement with their teachers or the school, and no moral support and assistance by family members with home assignments.

The problem situation can best be summarized in the following manner: Student behaviors, attitudes, and academic achievement were not improving under traditional teaching and support methods. These students appeared to have one commonality which can be related to a poor self-image and disinterested parents.

Problem Documentation

Examination of the student's test scores that were used as a basis for grade placement revealed that the students assigned to the alternative program were academically deficient in two or more subject areas. Reading test scores indicated that the average reading ability of these students was at the 2.8-3.5 level.

Interviews with guidance counselors, school psychologists, and teachers revealed that these students were prone to be discipline problems. These students

experienced numerous suspensions and after school detentions. Their attendance at school was very poor.

Interviews conducted with seven middle school principals to determine the extent of the problem was very informative. The problem existed at every middle school and was considered by the principals to be of serious magnitude. The impact upon the educational community was considered to be over-aged students in the different grade levels, more discipline problems, higher dropout rates, and overcrowding of plant facilities. (Refer to Appendix A.)

Causative Analysis

There are several causes behind this problem that have already been investigated by researchers. One cause that has been evaluated is the poor parent/child relationship that existed with this type of student. The parents were not supportive of the child's efforts to succeed in school. Likewise, the parent/school relationship was at a low ebb because some of the parents did not communicate with the school or respond to requests from the guidance department for parent/teacher conferences.

Another area considered to be a contributing cause is the fact that these students have not experienced success in their educational endeavors. Without success and rewards to foster motivation, the child tends to become "turned-off" on learning and the educational system.

These students were generally deficient in social, life, academic, and study skills. They found it difficult to concentrate on any one task for long periods of time, and when the task became too demanding frustration began to control their behavior.

Since the needs of these students were not being met either at home or in the school, they found it difficult to gain peer acceptance because of their attention getting behavior. Consequently, these students had a very poor self-image.

These students found it difficult to communicate effectively or to accept responsibility for their acts. The inability to communicate ideas added to their frustration, thereby, causing them to be discipline problems.

The Related Literature

One of the theories favoring alternative schools suggests that scholastic success and social support raise students' self-esteem and reduce their provocation to become delinquents. A longitudinal study by Mann and Gold (1981) was conducted to determine the effectiveness of three alternative secondary schools in improving the behavior of highly delinquent and disruptive students. These students were also compared to students in the conventional schools from which they came. The data indicated that the alternative schools made a significant difference in the

behavior of students who were less anxious and depressed and whose delinquency seemed effective in defending against negative affect. The assertion that poor scholastic experiences are significant causes of delinquent behavior, particularly at school, received substantial support. Further research is needed to determine whether alternative school-based programs should screen out very depressed and anxious students because the programs are less likely to help them.

In a recent study of behavioral covariation between academic performance and inappropriate behavior, Witt (1983) describes the effects of a home-based reinforcement program (designed to modify classroom behaviors) on the academic performance and behavior of 3 fourth-grade boys. Results demonstrated the effectiveness of home-base reinforcement intervention in improving the academic performance of underachieving children while simultaneously reducing associated inappropriate behavior.

In a research report provided by Reese (1981), she describes behavioral procedures used with adolescent students which involved manipulating type and delay of reinforcement, teaching desirable behaviors, and training in several skills. The procedures were implemented through an independent group-oriented contingency system, which led to

the students performing significantly better on grades, school attendance, and length of time absent due to suspension.

The conclusions that are drawn from the readings of these studies indicates a high correlation between behavioral conduct and academic performance. Although different approaches to behavioral change were practiced there remained one commonality, that of experiencing success and rewards for the participating students. Mann et al. (1981) found that alternative schools may have their limitations relative to the degree of aggressiveness by the assigned students to the program. Yet, many of their results coincide with Reese and Witt, thereby reinforcing the theory that a relationship between behavior and academic achievement does exist.

More than 40 studies have examined the effects of retention on student achievement, but only a few of these studies took place more recently than 1970. Most of the studies focused on children who were held back in non-remedial classes in the early elementary grades. The investigators generally used standardized, norm-referenced achievement tests to measure the effects of retention, and they rarely followed students for intervals of more than two years.

In 1975, Jackson published a comprehensive review

of 44 studies that examined the impact of retention on the achievement level of low achieving children.

Jackson noted that studies of the effects of retention tend to fall into three general categories. Some of these studies compare the progress of students who have been retained to the progress of students who have been promoted. Others look only at students who have been retained, comparing their progress before retention with their progress after retention. A third group of studies randomly assigns students as identified as potential candidates for retention to one of two groups, those who are promoted or those who are retained, and then compares the outcomes.

Jackson concluded that no firm evidence favors retention over social promotion as a means of spurring low achieving students to higher levels of performance. "Teachers who retain students do so" he said, "without sound evidence that retention is preferable to promotion."

Retention rates varied so greatly from one school to another in Austin, Texas, that a student retained in one school might well have been promoted in another, according to Schuyler and Matter (1983).

Schuyler and Matter used a combination of measures to develop their experimental design in their study of the impact of retention on students in Austin. They used scores

on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, scores on standardized tests of reading achievement, parents' opinions, and teachers' opinions - to assess, over a three year period, the academic progress of students who had been retained. The retained students were matched with promoted students on such factors as gender, ethnicity, age, placement in special education programs, and whether or not they were receiving free school lunches.

Over the course of the study, the students who had been retained increased their reading achievement by .8 of a grade equivalent per year on the average. The matched group of low achievers who had been promoted increased their reading achievement by 1.1 grade equivalents. With regard to math achievement, the comparable average gains per year (in grade equivalents) were .6 for students who had been retained and 1.1 for the low achievers who had been promoted. Some students seemed to benefit from retention, but most did not. They found that, once a child had been retained, he or she never seemed to catch up with classmates, unless the retention occurred in the first grade.

The effects of retention on social and emotional development have also been studied. In 1980, Ames reported that a child's reaction to retention depends

largely on how his or her parents handle the situation. She urged parents and teachers to explain to the child that the retention occurred because of a big mistake on the part of the adults: placement of the child in the wrong grade. The best basis for grade-level placement, according to Ames, is behavioral age, not chronological age. When children are inappropriately placed, they often perform poorly. Parents and teachers should move quickly to correct a mistake in grade-level placement, Ames said - the earlier the better.

However, other educators have reported that low-achievers who are promoted show better social adjustment than low-achievers who are retained. For example, Doss (1983) found that, by age 14, being older than average for one's grade level is a strong predictor of dropping out. This finding has implications that are not usually considered when the decision to retain an elementary student is made, according to Schuyler.

In 1981, Sandoval and Hughes announced the findings from their study of factors that predict successful retention in the first grade. They defined success in terms of academic gains, level of emotional development, amount of improvement in social skills, and assessments, of overall progress by teachers and parents. They found that retention is successful with a child of normal or

near-normal intelligence (not more than one standard deviation below the norm) who has made some academic progress during the first year in first grade, who is not performing at extremely low levels, who is emotionally well-adjusted, and who has (or is developing) appropriate social skills.

They found too, that parental attitudes are important in determining whether or not retention will be successful. Children whose parents accept and support the placement decision are generally more successful than children whose parents do not.

Finally, Sandoval and Hughes found that teacher attitudes played a role in determining the outcome of retention. Children for whom retention proved beneficial had teachers during their first year in first grade who felt confident that the children should be retained and who also had good personal relationships with the children.

A token economy program is a systematic and consistent application of the behavior modification principles of positive reinforcement and extinction. To be effective teachers should be trained to apply reinforcers to a carefully defined behavior and to apply them regularly, in a similar fashion each time, and with a particular goal in mind.

Golub and Sweeney (1981) conducted a study to evaluate the effectiveness of a token economy program in increasing academic performance in a bilingual education classroom setting, as well as to train the teacher in the basic behavior modification principles and assist him or her in the delivery of appropriate and consistent reinforcement contingencies.

Four subjects were selected from a fifth grade class in a bilingual/bicultural education classroom in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. The class received daily test scores in Social Sciences and English. Questions were about the material taught by the teacher on these subject matters. Percentage of correct responses were recorded in absence of reinforcements and during the token economy program.

The token economy system was developed to strengthen completion and accuracy of the students' performance. This system enabled the child to earn recognition (points) for his/her efforts. Points could be exchanged for a wide variety of activities, privileges and priorities. Prices and performance requirements were explicitly posted throughout the classroom.

A response cost strategy was used, that is, students could lose points for misbehaving. Disruptive behavior was defined similarly to Becker, Madsen, Arnold, and Thomas (1967):

Out of seat behavior: defined as leaving the seat and/or seated position during a lesson without teacher's permission. It includes standing, running, and walking around.

Noise-producing behavior: audible vocally or manually produced sounds made during a time in which students should be working or listening. It includes talking out loud to self or others, calling out to teacher or other pupils, singing, whistling, humming, talking while raising one's hand or making vocal noises like howls, cat calls, animal sounds, etc. It also includes tapping, clapping, pounding objects, snapping fingers, and stamping feet.

Gross-motor behavior: engaging in any motor behavior that interferes with another student's studying: any physical contact with another student, his desk, or any objects on it. It includes hitting, picking, grabbing another's book, tearing up another's paper, turning to the person behind, looking to the rear of the room when the teacher is in the front of the class, and throwing objects.

Golub and Sweeney report that reinforcement of academic performance increased the percentage of correct answers for the target students. The mean percent of academic accuracy during the non-reward phase was approximately 25 percent. During the reward phase it increased to approximately 75 percent.

Their results indicate that a systematic reinforcement program like the token economy system is effective in improving academic performance as measured by the percent of correct answers in Social Science and English tests.

The emphasis of this study by Golub and Sweeney was on academic performance and not on disruptive behavior. They say that this provides a positive approach to education; that is, a focus on academic objectives, rather than on undesirable behavior. While disruptive behavior and discipline in the classroom are the major, and often the immediate objectives of the classroom teacher, the evidence has showed that decreasing disruptive activities in the classroom does not necessarily increase academic performance.

One of the theories favoring alternative schools suggests that scholastic success and social support raise students' self-esteem and reduce their provocation to become delinquents.

A longitudinal study was conducted by Mann and Gold (1981) to determine the effectiveness of three alternative secondary schools in improving the behavior of highly delinquent and disruptive students. These students were also compared to students in the conventional schools from which they came.

Their basic strategy was to compare students who had had alternative school experience with those who had none at each of the three time periods and with respect to changes over time. Comparisons were made of the two groups each taken as a whole and for each of the three programs.

Mann and Gold reported in their findings that the delinquent and disruptive behavior of both the alternative and conventional school students declined over the course of the study, probably reflecting in part a combination of statistical artifact ("regression to the mean") and actual improvement accompanying maturation. However, almost all of the social psychological processes that were hypothesized to make a difference in the misbehavior of youth were indeed found to predict to a significantly greater decline. And the alternative schools were more effective in putting these processes in motion.

They found that the effectiveness of the alternative school programs to be conditioned upon the kind of students in their classes. The alternative schools made a significant difference in the behavior of their more buoyant students, but they had a negligible effect on the more beset students.

The "beset" students in this study were identified as those alternative and conventional students who exhibited

relatively high levels of anxiety and depression during the first interview with them. The alternative and conventional school groups in this study each had about the same proportion of beset students. Beset students tended to be somewhat more delinquent than the buoyant students. They resemble the unsocialized "neurotic" type of delinquent that Hewitt and Jenkins (1946) identified from clinical records.

Additional findings by Mann and Gold indicated that the students saw the alternative schools as being more flexible, thereby fostering greater commitment to the student role, but only among the alternative schools' buoyant students, who then remained more committed through the third interview. The beset alternative students as a group never exceeded their conventional counterparts in commitment to studenthood, despite their recognition of the alternative schools' greater flexibility

Their theory of a particular kind of alternative school as a means for reducing disruptive and delinquent behavior posits that youngsters' self-esteem is a key variable. Nevertheless, improvement in the behavior and performance of the buoyant alternative students occurred without discernible change in their unconscious self-esteem and in the face of a decline in their conscious self-esteem. Self-esteem proved not so crucial to the processes of change as

the investigators had expected it to be. Changes in academic prospects, commitment to the role of student, and attitudes toward school made a difference for the buoyant alternative students.

In order for a classroom intervention to be utilized by harried teachers it must be efficient in terms of time and person resources, and it must be effective in modifying classroom behavior (Bergan & Neumann, 1980). In this vein, Patterson, Cobb, and Ray (1971) suggested: "Because most of the teachers with whom we worked had a deep antipathy towards the whole idea of behavior modification, the emphasis has been to develop an approach which requires low response cost on the part of the teacher" (p. 151). A behavior intervention which lacks effectiveness, requires excess teacher time, and is too expensive is likely to be discarded by teachers. The design of strategies which are easy to implement, while remaining effective, is an important mandate for behavior change agents.

Home-based reinforcement programs, designed to modify classroom behaviors are well-established interventions which have proven useful for controlling a wide variety of students across a wide array of situations (Atkeson & Forehand, 1979; Barth, 1979; Berkowitz & Graziano, 1972; O'Dell, 1974). Typically, a teacher reports by means of a

note to the parents the degree to which a child has performed appropriately at school. Parents subsequently institute contingencies in the home depending upon the student performance described in the note. The sending home of a note usually requires considerably less effort than is needed for even simple token economies or other interventions based solely in the classroom. Additionally, the type and quality of reinforcers available in the classroom pale in comparison to those available to parents (Ayllon, Garber, & Pisor, 1975; Atkenson & Forehand, 1979; Bailey, Wolf, & Phillips, 1970; Schumaker, Hovell, & Sherman, 1977).

Home-based systems have been used successfully to decrease disruptive classroom behaviors (Ayllon, Garber, & Pisor, 1975; Budd, Leibowitz, Riner, Mindell, & Goldfarb, 1981; Clark, 1972; Todd, Scott, Bostow, & Alexander, 1976), increase appropriate academic behaviors (Karraker, 1972; Saudargas, Madsen, & Scott, 1977), and to effect positive change in some combination of academic and disruptive behaviors (Bailey, Wolf, and Phillips, 1970; Heaton, Safer, Allen, Spinnato, & Prumo, 1976; Lahey, Gendrich, Gendrich,, Schnelle, Gant, & McNees, 1977; Martin, Bruckholder, Rosenthal, Tharp, & Thorn, 1968; Schumaker, Hovell, & Sherman, 1977; Strober & Bellack, 1975).

Home-based programs which focus on academic behaviors offer several distinct advantages over programs where contingencies have been applied solely to disruptive behaviors. First they tend to be easier to implement since it is easier to record academic behavior, such as percent correct on homework, than to monitor accurately a disruptive behavior, such as talking, which may occur throughout the day. Second, parents may be able to help teach and intervene directly with academic behaviors. Third, programs which focus exclusively on disruptive behavior have been criticized because reducing disruptive behavior does not necessarily result in a corresponding increase in academic achievement (Ferritor, Buckholdt, Hamblin, & Smith, 1972). Moreover, a focus solely on disruptive behavior may encourage and facilitate the notion that teacher effectiveness should be evaluated more on the basis of maintaining an orderly, quiet classroom than on the basis of increases in student performance (Ayllon & Roberts, 1974). In this context, Winnett and Winkler (1972) chided the behavior modification establishment for helping to maintain order and control when "it may be that learning can take place more effectively if it can be accompanied by singing and laughing and whistling and that a quiet, controlled, docile classroom may not be only unnecessary but destructive" (p. 500).

Although a home-based reinforcement program which focuses on academic performance appears to offer some advantages, the effectiveness of such a procedure remains unknown. Studies which have included academic behaviors typically have not focused on specific performance (i.e., number of problems completed correctly); instead, listening to the teacher or looking at one's paper has generally been defined as academic behavior (Atkeson & Forehand, 1979). The broader definition typically applied to academic behavior does not offer the same advantages as a definition limited to academic performance. Investigations which have included academic performance as a home-based contingency have also included contingencies on disruptive behavior (e.g., talking, out of seat). This method renders impossible the evaluation of the unique contributions of reinforcing academic performance (Schumaker, Hovell, & Sherman, 1977).

Chapter III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Statement of General Goals

The students assigned to this program received learning experiences and reinforcement agents that led them to become better behaved students with improved academic achievement. As a result of experiencing success and recognition, the students demonstrated confidence in themselves and were able to communicate more effectively with their parents, teachers, and peers, coupled with showing more responsibility for their own actions and respect for the rights and property of others. Parents became involved with the program, and developed a more positive parent/child and parent/school relationship.

Behavioral Expectations

The following goals were projected for this practicum:

1. That 9 out of 15 subjects assigned to this program will demonstrate improved behavior. (Refer to Appendix N.)
2. That 9 out of 15 subjects assigned to this program will show an improvement in their academic achievement. (Refer to Appendix N.)
3. That 10 out of 15 subjects assigned to this program will show a decline in the number of referrals that result in suspension. (Refer to Appendix N.)

4. That 10 out of 15 subjects assigned to this program will improve their school attendance. (Refer to Appendix N.)
5. That at least one parent from 8 of the subjects assigned to this program will become actively involved with and supportive of the program and their child. (Refer to Appendix N.)

Evaluation Instruments

Unexpected events that occurred during the time frame of this activity were recorded in a journal. The title of the journal was called "Unpredicted Phenomenon" (Refer to Appendix B.)

Techniques used to foster involvement of the parents with the school and support of their child were through contractual agreements. Two contracts were developed. The first was called "Student Help and Reinforcement Program (SHARP), Treatment Contract". This contract was an agreement between the group leader, subject, and the parent. It defined the role and responsibility of each party, and the reward-consequence system that was employed. (See Appendix C.) The second contract was called "Student Help and Reinforcement Program, Home Contingency Contract". This contract was drawn up between the subject and parent, with both parties making contributions in its development. There were four sections contained in this contract. The first was for the purpose. Why are we making this contract?

The second section was concerned about goals. What do we expect to be accomplished? The third area defined what the group member will do, and the fourth area defined, in return, the parent will do. Both parties signed the contract with an agreed upon date for review and/or renewal. (See Appendix D.) The group leader and the subject's parents each received a copy of both contracts.

In addition to the contracts the subjects received a SHARP Daily Report Card reflecting behavioral and academic performance in five disciplines. The subjects were required to take their cards home each day to be reviewed and signed by their parents or guardians. The subjects returned their report cards to their first period teacher on the next school day, at which time another daily report card was provided. The subjects then repeated the procedure of presenting their cards to each teacher as they attended their scheduled classes. (See Appendix E.)

Through the use of a SHARP Daily Homework Record the subjects developed self-discipline, and parental involvement was enhanced. The subjects carried a form to record homework assignments for each discipline. If no homework was assigned the subject would state so on the form by writing the word NONE. The subjects were held responsible for writing their assignments. The teacher would initial

the form to indicate that the entry was correct. The parents would sign the form to indicate that the assignmment had been completed. On the next school day the subjects would return their forms to their first period teacher, at which time they received another one for that day. (Refer to Appendix F.)

A SHARP Observation Form was completed by the subject's five teachers. Two observations were made by each teacher at different class periods of the day. The input from these ten observations was used to establish the necessary base line for each participant prior to the administration of the treatment. The format of the observation form is similar to the daily report card. (Refer to Appendix G.)

The data obtained from the teacher observation reports and the daily report cards were transposed to a SHARP Progression Graph. This line graph reflected the average daily behavior and academic ratings of each subject on a performance scale of 0 to 100. A record of absences was included on the graph as verified by teacher attendance reports. (Refer to Appendix H.)

The SHARP Administrators Daily Report provided up to date information on referrals, detentions, and suspensions that were related to the subjects. (See Appendix I.) The data obtained from the administrators daily report was

transposed to a line graph that was called the SHARP Administrators Chart. This graph showed the number of daily referrals, detentions, suspensions, and attendance activity of each of the subjects. (Refer to Appendix J.)

When parents signed the daily report card and the daily homework record it was recorded on the Parent Involvement Graph. Likewise, on the same graph, their attendance at meetings and conferences were also recorded. (Refer to Appendx K.)

The Objective-Instrument-Criteria for Success Chart defined the instruments that were used to gather data on the five objectives that the SHARP program was designed to accomplish. The subjects performance and improvement or failure, and the parents involvement, was measured by the criteria that had been established for each objective. (Refer to Appendix N.)

The SHARP instruments, located in the Appendixes, are not under copyright law. They have been designed by the author for use with this specific program.

Chapter IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

Golub and Sweeney (1981) report that reinforcement of academic performance increased the percentage of correct answers for the target students. The mean of academic accuracy during the non-reward phase was approximately 25 percent. During the reward phase it increased to approximately 75 percent.

Their results indicate that a systematic reinforcement program like the token economy system is effective in improving academic performance as measured by the percent of correct answers in Social Science and English tests.

The emphasis of this study by Golub and Sweeney was on academic performance and not on disruptive behavior. They say that this provides a positive approach to education; that is, a focus on academic objectives, rather than on undesirable behavior. While disruptive behavior and discipline in the classroom are the major, and often the immediate objectives of the classroom teacher, the evidence has showed that decreasing disruptive activities in the classroom does not necessarily increase academic performance.

The assertive discipline approach as designed by Canter (1979) provides a positive take charge procedure for

teachers working with children with behavior problems. The demonstrations and observations indicate that rewards and consequences must be clearly understood by the children. Furthermore, it places responsibility on the child with effective methods outlined for the teacher to follow.

One of the theories favoring alternative schools suggests that scholastic success and social support raise students' self-esteem and reduce their provocation to become delinquents. A longitudinal study by Mann and Gold (1981) was conducted to determine the effectiveness of three alternative secondary schools in improving the behavior of highly delinquent and disruptive students. These students were also compared to students in the conventional schools from which they came. The data indicated that the alternative schools made a significant difference in the behavior of students who were less anxious and depressed and whose delinquency seemed effective in defending against negative affect. The assertion that poor scholastic experiences are significant causes of delinquent behavior, particularly at school, received substantial support. Further research is needed to determine whether alternative school-based programs should screen out very depressed and anxious students because the programs are less likely to help them.

In a recent study of behavioral covariation between academic performance and inappropriate behavior, Witt (1983) describes the effects of a home-based reinforcement program (designed to modify classroom behaviors) on the academic performance and behavior of 3 fourth-grade boys. Results demonstrated the effectiveness of home-based reinforcement intervention in improving the academic performance of underachieving children while simultaneously reducing associated inappropriate behavior.

In a research report provided by Reese (1981), she described behavioral procedures used with adolescent students which involved manipulating type and delay of reinforcement, teaching desirable behaviors, and training in several skills. The procedures were implemented through an independent group-oriented contingency system, which led to the students performing significantly better on grades, school attendance, and length of time absent due to suspension.

These studies provided the foundation for the solution applied to the problem. Their application worked successfully with subjects that had similar characteristics as those that were involved in this activity. Stressing rewards to reinforce positive behavior change and academic improvement related well with the goals of the "Student Help and Reinforcement Program." The strengths of these studies

contributed significantly and complemented other techniques that were considered for this activity.

Analysis of these studies did not indicate any author bias, although the study by Witt did present uncontrollable variables. His study was centered around a home-based reinforcement program that did not have built in controls to handle situations that either he could not be aware of, or that would prevent parent bias.

Description of Selected Solutions

In establishing an effective program with accountability, specific procedures were followed:

1. A name was selected for the program that was descriptive of its intent. It was called the "Student Help and Reinforcement Program." The acronym "SHARP" was used to promote a positive connotation of the activity. When reference was made about the program or anyone associated with it, the acronym "SHARP" preceded the statement, such as SHARP students, SHARP parents, and SHARP teachers.
2. There was one group of 15 subjects under the direction of one group leader during the course of this activity. Because the activity took place in a middle school that was departmentalized, the subjects had to change teachers throughout the day like the rest of the student body.

3. The group leader was the subjects' first period teacher, who had the responsibility of receiving feedback from the regular teachers in the form of daily academic and behavioral grades; in-put from the school administrators that came in the form of reports on referrals, detentions, and suspensions encountered by each subject; maintained individual folders for each subject and filed all pertinent documentation; everyday collected the daily report card that was completed by all of the subjects' teachers, and provided a replacement card; collected the subjects daily homework record and checked it for teachers' initials for their disciplines, and parent signatures indicating that the assignment had been completed, then provided a new form; conducted meetings with the parents or guardians of the members; and encouraged the use of the contract, token reward, and consequence system with the participants.

4. An academic and behavioral baseline was developed from in-put provided by the subjects' regular classroom teachers. Each teacher of the five disciplines provided two observational reports. As an example, Social Studies, period 1, Monday; Math., period 2, Tuesday; Science, period 3, Wednesday; English, period 4, Thursday; and Reading, period 5, Friday. This procedure was repeated a second consecutive school week, which provided ten observations at different times, and by different teachers.

4. The SHARP parents were invited to a meeting where the goals, objectives, and procedures of the SHARP program were fully explained. While the parents were at the meeting, the various forms and reports were introduced, such as: The SHARP Student Daily Homework Record; the SHARP Daily Report Card; the SHARP Treatment Contract, that was to be signed by the group leader (1st period teacher), the student, and the parent/guardian. One copy was kept by the group leader, and one by the parent/guardian. An explanation of the SHARP Home Contingency Contract was provided with suggestions for a home-based reinforcement and consequence system. This form was completed between and signed by both the parent and the student. The group leader received one copy and the parent-student kept a copy.

The design of the SHARP Treatment Contract and the reward system was the same and remained consistent for all subjects. However, the Home Contingency Contract differed among the subjects because of uncontrollable variables.

5. Administrators and the group leader involved in the SHARP program received inservicing to provide them with a foundation that made them more effective in reaching the goals and objectives of this activity. This training was

conducted in four mini-workshops that outlined the different aspects and sequence of: Time line progression activities and start-up procedures; self-concept, motivational and alternative learning activities; classroom management and teaching strategies; probing, reinforcement, and testing techniques.

To put the SHARP program into operation and to make it more meaningful the following materials, methodologies, teaching strategies, and support services were employed:

1) A study skills unit was implemented at the start of the program which included motivation, listening, setting goals, testing, values, following directions, and improving self-concept.
2) Positive reinforcement techniques that came in the form of praise, free time passes, awards, parent letters, and displaying student work were used.
3) Positive interaction between the SHARP group leader and the SHARP student was the rule of the day.
4) Visiting Teachers/School Social Workers were called upon to confer and counsel chronic absentees.
5) Concentration on small group instruction, and individualizing where necessary, was the main approach.
6) Low level, high interest books were provided, and opportunities for the SHARP students to read for pleasure on a daily basis for at least 15 minutes.

7) Demonstrated the use of an interdisciplinary approach in daily lesson plans and activities.

8) Concrete objects such as manipulatives were used, whenever possible, to develop understanding of concepts or processes.

9) The language experience approach in content area (science, social studies) was used to increase vocabulary as well as build up a conceptual background.

10) Enrichment learning centers were used to encourage the interdisciplinary approach to curriculum.

11) A consistent plan for at-home reading and homework was developed with the SHARP parents.

12) Varied social experiences in the form of trips, guest speakers, and assemblies were provided.

13) Specialized personnel were utilized to diagnose needs of students, talked over problems and communicated to the group leader as to how they felt that the students' needs could be better met. They were called from:

    a. guidance counselors
    b. visiting teachers/school social workers
    c. psychologists
    d. peer counselors
    e. curriculum specialists

14) A variety of media methods, and material to accomodate differing learning styles were provided.

a. overhead projectors

b. record players

c. opaque projectors

d. tape recorders

e. movie projectors

f. video-tape projectors

g. slide and filmstrip projectors

h. kits

i. computers

15) Provision for utilizing specialized personnel who provided counseling and social services.

a. The guidance counselor assisted in student placement through interpretation of test scores and student records, and participated in parent conferences.

16) A variety of classroom arrangements and environements were used.

a. The SHARP students changed classrooms at the end of each period.

b. Each student was provided an individual desk.

c. Tables were available for group activities.

d. Adequate bulletin board space to display the subject's work was made available.

e. A large chalkboard area was utilized.

f. A "quiet corner" was made available for SHARP students who had to be withdrawn from the rest of the group for disruptive behavior. Two study carrels met the need for providing temporary isolation from the other SHARP students.

17) Strategies for articulation between the SHARP teacher and the regular program teacher were used.

a. Contact was maintained between the SHARP teacher and the regular classroom teachers.

b. The SHARP students used the on-level state adopted textbooks, supplemented with low level, high interest content related materials.

18) Special Considerations

a. The students that were assigned to this program had previously made unsatisfactory progress. Many also had serious attendance problems. All of the procedures used were of a positive nature, that encouraged the SHARP students to remain in school.

b. Students were exposed to a variety of stimulating teacher techniques. The program was designed so that students could explore areas of interest which could lead to a possible career.

19) Support Services

a. Consumable supplies, audio/visual equipment, furniture, space, and textbooks were provided by the school principal with funding from the school budget.

Report of Action Taken

To initiate the Student Help and Reinforcement Program several pre-operational activities had to take place.

The first of these activities consisted of a conference with the principal of the school where the program was to be implemented. It was necessary to have his complete approval and understanding of the program, together with material and administrative support for the SHARP teacher. Once the principal had given his approval the selection of a teacher to work with the SHARP students was started. The criteria used in the selection process was (1) a willingness to work with this caliber of student; (2) ready and willing to accept new ideas and methodologies; (3) does not over-react to problem situations; (4) has good managerial qualities; (5) and who demonstrates warmth, understanding, and empathy with the children. A seventh grade teacher was found who met all of the requirements. She was willing to accept the the program as a teaching assignment, consequently directing the delivery of SHARP at that grade level. The seventh

grade assistant principal was given a briefing about the program and he indicated his acceptance of the role that he was to fill.

The next pre-operational activity that confronted the implementation of the program was the selection of the students that would be eligible to participate. The established criteria for entry were (1) the student failed two or more subjects the previous school year; (2) the student was retained in the same grade; (3) the student has a poor reading ability; (4) the student has demonstrated by past performance poor academic achievement, and disruptive or disinterested behavior patterns, (5) teachers, guidance counselors, and school psychologists recommendations were solicited; (6) and test placement scores.

Fifteen seventh grade students that met the criteria for admission to the program were selected. A change of schedule for these students remained pending until the actual operation was implemented. The SHARP students schedules were arranged so that the students would meet as a group during the first period of each school day. The SHARP teacher would be with them as their instructor in that block of time. The content area could have been in any one of the disciplines. In this case, it happened to be social studies.

Inservicing of the SHARP administrator and teacher was

conducted by the author. The training was done in four mini-workshops, each lasting for two hours. The topic for the first session was to outline the tasks and the sequence of the time-line progression activities and start-up procedures. The topics for the next three sessions were: self concept, motivational, and alternative learning activities; classroom management and teaching strategies; probing, reinforcement, and testing techniques, respectively.

During the pre-operational period the SHARP teacher prepared a folder for each student that was to be assigned to the program. These folders were used to file documentary materials that related to the participants. A special folder was prepared for the filing of the SHARP Administrators Daily Report. A supply of forms, letters, contracts, and the reward menu were provided to the SHARP teacher by the author.

The SHARP administrator coordinated with the regular teachers the data gathering task to develop an average academic and behavioral baseline rating for the students involved in the program. The regular classroom teachers were supplied with a sufficient number of SHARP Teacher Observation In-put forms to do two commentaries on each subject. The teachers were then given assigned days of the

week to perform this mission, thereby, providing a total of ten observations, at different times of the day, and by different teachers. The data received from the observations were averaged so that each participant in the program had an average academic and behavioral rating prior to the operation of the activity.

While the teachers were developing their observation reports the SHARP administrator likewise started his data collection on the SHARP Administrators Daily Report on Referrals, Detentions, and Suspensions. This information was also collected for ten days to establish a baseline on the subjects.

Simultaneously, the author mailed information letters to the parents or guardians of the selected candidates. The purpose of this letter was to inform those concerned about their child's assignment to the SHARP program, stressing the necessity of parental involvement, and the resulting benefits for their child. A parent meeting with the author, SHARP teacher, and the SHARP administrator was scheduled in the letter with a response sheet attached. To assure better attendance and make it as convenient as possible, serious thought was given to the time, date, and place of the meeting. It was decided to hold the meeting on a Saturday afternoon, the weekend before program implementation, at

5:00 o'clock in the afternoon, in a library that served the target population. A deviation from the original plan of action took place by changing the planned scheduled time frame for this gathering. The meeting was to be held during the third week when the program started. However, to gain the full support of the parents and to make the meeting more effective, it was felt that the parents should be informed about the program and have their questions answered before the activity commenced.

At the meeting, those in attendance, were introduced to the teacher, administrator, and the author of the SHARP program. The objectives and procedures of the activity were fully explained, accompanied with a complete description of the forms that were to be used. Parents were provided with opportunities to examine and ask questions about the SHARP Treatment Contract, SHARP Home Contingency Contract, SHARP Daily Report Card, and the SHARP Students Daily Homework Record. Throughout the meeting suggestions were offered to the parents and guardians relative to the importance of their role in the program, provisions for good study areas, and ideas for a reasonable at-home reward and consequence system.

At the conclusion of the meeting the parents were told that the program would start on the following Monday, and that their children would be bringing home two completed

copies of the SHARP Treatment Contract that has already been signed by the student and the teacher. After the parent has signed it, one copy was to be returned to the teacher. In addition to the treatment contract, the child would have two copies of the SHARP Home Contingency Contract. When the parent and the student have completed the contract, signed by both parties, and with an agreed upon renewal/review date, one copy was to be returned to the teacher.

During the pre-operational period the author, SHARP teacher, and the SHARP administrator worked together to design a reinforcement-consequence system that would be the same for and followed by all of the SHARP students. Now that the SHARP teacher had this information, a reward menu listing the specific activities that were available for academic performance was posted in the classroom.

Students who completed five days with an average grade of 75 or above would receive a "Free-Time" pass to partake in an activity of their choice as listed on the menu. The same ruling applied to the average behavioral rating except that the SHARP student would get a ticket to the "Grab-Bag" to draw a card with the activity printed on it. In this manner behavior was being rewarded even though a child's academic performance was retarded. In accordance with the SHARP Treatment Contract the students could earn tokens for assignment completion, attendance, and punctuality. These

tokens could later be used, or accumulated, to purchase "Free-Time" passes, items from the class store on specified days, and group rewards such as recognition parties.

Also, during the ten day pre-operational period the SHARP teacher was able to arrange the room environment, accumulate supplemental low level, high interest content related reading material, get audio-visual equipment, teaching supplies, on level and low level textbooks, workbooks, resource packages, educational content games, skill building activities, and prepare the first two weeks of lesson plans.

In the third week, on Monday, the SHARP program became functional. The participants arrived with their schedule changes that they had received on Friday.

The first class session was primarily an introduction to the program. The goals, objectives, reward and consequence system, contracts, forms, and procedures were discussed at length. The SHARP teacher then gave each SHARP student two copies of the SHARP Treatment Contract and two copies of the SHARP Home Contingency Contract. The treatment contract was completed in class and signed by the SHARP group. They were then directed to take them home that afternoon for their parent/guardian signature, and to bring one copy of the treatment contract back to class the next day. One week was allowed for the completion of the home

contingency contract, with a copy to be returned no later than the following Monday.

The SHARP teacher, from this point on, employed the materials, methodologies, teaching strategies, management techniques, and utilized the support services developed for this program.

In week four of the practicum, and two weeks of continuous treatment, the author reviewed the SHARP students documentation folders. Attendance records were examined, and the daily behavior and academic grades were averaged. This data was then transposed to the SHARP Students Progression Graph.

A check was also made to determine the number of treatment contracts and home contingency contracts that were on file. Also, the frequency that parents had signed the daily report card and the daily homework record was tabulated. This search provided data to indicate the extent of parental involvement with the program.

An examination of the Daily SHARP Administrators Report provided information about the number of administrative encounters each of the SHARP students had since their

baselines were formed. This data was transposed to the SHARP Administrators Chart that had been prepared for each individual SHARP student.

A meeting with the SHARP administrator and teacher was held in the fifth week of the program to analyze the statistics obtained after two weeks of treatment. On the agenda for this meeting was a discussion about the program and any unexpected problems that may have occurred since its implementation.

The statistics were not very encouraging at this time which was understandable, since the students have been plagued with their dilemma for years.

The only problem that the teacher had experienced was in the method to effectively record the tokens or points earned for academic and behavior performance. After a period of brainstorming it was decided that a system conducive to a learning experience for the students should be used. From this interaction evolved the "SHARPBUCK BANK" (See Appendix O.) This procedure allowed for opportunities in practicing life skills, involvement in role playing, and in accepting responsibility by the SHARP students. The SHARP teacher assumed the role of the bank auditor.

A follow-up meeting was held with the parents during the same week. Each parent received a copy of their child's progression graph and the administrators chart. An in-depth explanation of the statistical data, their implications, and comparisons to the baselines were made. Parents were given the time to ask questions and express any concerns that they may have since the program started.

A few parents expressed difficulties that they, as well as their child, sometimes experience in coping with the home contingency contract. In response, it was emphasized that the home contingency contract should be reasonable enough so that both parties can live with it and not be under stress. This factor is very important to its success. That's why, it was explained to the parents, the contract should be reviewed and/or renewed about every 10 to 15 days, using the same development procedures as the initial contract. In this manner, communication is enhanced, goals and objectives can be evaluated, and difficulties can be corrected. At this meeting the same number of parents attended as in the initial meeting, plus one more. This brought the total number of SHARP students represented by parents to 6.

In the 8th week of the practicum, and 6 weeks of treatment, a noticeable change in the behavior, attitude, and academic performance of the SHARP students was beginning

to take place. The participants were showing a more positive attitude toward their peers, school, and learning in general. Attendance was improving, while referrals, suspensions, and detentions were declining, although not completely eliminated. The SHARP students academic performance was on the upswing as compared to their baselines of 6 weeks ago.

Another plus, which was an unexpected side benefit, came in the form of feedback from the regular teachers. There appeared to be a carryover to the regular classes. Teachers reported that many SHARP students who could not be trusted alone, were now more dependable and could be relied upon to run errands and even go to the library without supervision and not create disruptions.

The data collected since the last reporting period was transposed to the appropriate graphs, followed by a meeting with the SHARP administrator and teacher. Both parties expressed their satisfaction with the progress of the participants and the program. No unexpected problems were reported. A meeting was then schedule with the parents for the following week to discuss the progress of their children and the effects, if any, of the program at home.

The meeting with the parents in the 9th week proved to be very encouraging. All of the parents who had attended

the previous meetings were in attendance with the addition of 3 more SHARP students being represented. The new parents present came as a result of receiving in the mail their child's last progression graph and the administrators chart with a letter explaining the data. After learning more about the program from some of the involved parents, and from their own children, they felt compelled to attend.

The parent in-put indicated an improvement in their children's behavior at home, together with a more amiable home environment for the entire family. Much of the success, according to the parents, can be attributed to the home contingency contract, because it provided an avenue to open a line of communication and establish responsibilities with their children. The parents reported that they are now able to cope with the contract because they are not setting their goals too high, rather, they are taking smaller steps to reach their ultimate goals.

In the 12th week of the practicum and after 10 weeks of continuous treatment, the data gathered since the last graph preparation was entered on a final graph to complete the reporting procedures for this activity. The program was to continue for another two weeks which would be the end of the school year. A final parent, teacher, administrator, and student meeting was held to review the program outcomes

and to gain participant reactions. Students and parents both voiced concern about the existence of the program for the next school year, and the possibility of the students continuing on in the 8th grade. These were questions that could not be answered at that time because various factors such as teacher assignments, budgets, and projected school enrollment had to be considered.

Chapter V

RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The use of a programmed behavior management system that included reinforcement agents and motivational techniques proved to be influential in the development and display of appropriate behavior among many of the student participants.

Results as shown for each of the objectives lend credence to the review of the literature which is supportive of the relationship between behavior, academic performance, and parent involvement. The 5 objectives developed for this design follows:

1. That 9 out of 15 subjects assigned to this program will demonstrate improved behavior.

The statistical results indicate that this objective was more than successfully met. Table 1, reflects the student's average letter grade for behavior covering the baseline and 3 reporting periods.

It is interesting to note that 10 out of 15 students met the criteria for this objective. Furthermore, 6 out of the 10 students increased their behavioral rating by 2 letter grades, which surpassed the criteria for success, and 4 students improved by one letter grade.

Table 1

Average Letter Grade for Behavior

Student	Baseline	Report 1	Report 2	Report 3
1	F	F	F	D
2	F	F	D	C
3	F	F	F	F
4	F	F	F	F
5	F	F	F	D
6	F	F	D	C
7	F	D	D	C
8	F	F	F	D
9	F	F	F	F
10	F	F	D	C
11	F	F	F	F
12	F	D	C	C
13	F	F	F	F
14	F	F	D	D
15	F	F	D	C

2. That 9 out of 15 students assigned to this program will show an improvement in their academic achievement.

The statistical results as shown on Table 2 reveal that this objective was successfully met. Nine students out of 15 met the criteria for success. Of the 9 students, 4 improved by 2 letter grades, while 5 improved by one grade.

Table 2

Average Letter Grade for Academic Achievement

Student	Baseline	Report 1	Report 2	Report 3
1	F	F	F	F
2	F	F	D	C
3	F	F	F	F
4	F	F	F	F
5	F	F	D	D
6	F	F	F	D
7	F	F	D	D
8	F	F	D	C
9	F	F	F	F
10	F	F	D	C
11	F	F	F	F
12	F	D	C	C
13	F	F	F	F
14	F	F	F	D
15	F	F	F	D

3. That 10 out of 15 students assigned to this program will show a decline in the number of referrals that result in suspension.

The statistical results as shown on Table 3 reveal that this objective was successfully met. Ten students out of 15 met the criteria for success.

Table 3

Student Referrals Resulting in Suspension

Student	Baseline	Report 1	Report 2	Report 3
1	5	2	2	0
2	3	3	1	0
3	4	2	1	2
4	2	1	2	2
5	2	1	1	0
6	1	0	0	0
7	2	1	0	0
8	0	0	1	0
9	5	4	3	3
10	2	1	0	0
11	2	1	1	1
12	0	1	0	0
13	4	1	1	1
14	1	0	0	0
15	1	0	0	0

4. That 10 out of 15 students assigned to this program will improve their school attendance.

The statistical results as shown in Table 4 reveal that this objective was more than successfully met. Twelve students out of 15 met the criteria for success.

Table 4

Number of Days Absent

Student	Baseline	Report 1	Report 2	Report 3
1	9	6	6	2
2	12	9	4	0
3	14	12	12	10
4	7	4	8	6
5	6	4	3	0
6	5	3	1	0
7	6	4	0	0
8	4	3	3	0
9	15	15	12	9
10	6	3	0	0
11	10	7	3	5
12	3	1	1	0
13	12	7	6	8
14	5	5	3	0
15	6	4	0	0

5. That at least 1 parent from 8 of the students assigned to this program will become actively involved with and supportive of the program and their child.

The statistical results as shown in Table 5 reveal that this objective was more than successfully met. Nine out of 15 students were represented by at least one parent.

Table 5

Parental Involvement

Student	Baseline	Report 1	Report 2	Report 3
1	No	No	No	No
2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
3	No	No	No	No
4	No	No	No	No
5	No	No	Yes	Yes
6	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
7	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
8	No	No	Yes	Yes
9	No	No	No	No
10	No	No	Yes	Yes
11	No	No	No	No
12	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
13	No	No	No	No
14	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Conclusions

The results of the SHARP program indicate that a systematic behavior management approach, incorporating positive reinforcement techniques and parental involvement, can be effective in reducing inappropriate behavior and improving academic achievement.

By drawing on the strengths of the review of the literature and discarding their weaknesses, various methods were employed to develop a well-rounded program for change. The emphasis of this activity was on both, improving behavior and academic achievement, not to determine which aspect influenced the other.

The initiation of treatment contracts, home contingency contracts, daily report cards, and homework records was done to involve parents and students with each other and the school, thereby creating a compact between all parties concerned. Because rewards, objectives and goals, and responsibilities were delineated for parent/child, parent/school, and child/school relationships, a behavior management system evolved.

Students 2, 7, 12, 14, and 15 had parent involvement from the baseline throughout the program. Accordingly, their average letter grades for behavior appeared to be strongly influenced. Students 2, 7, 12, and 15 had advanced

their behavior rating by 2 letter grades, whereas, student 14 advanced by one letter grade. These same students had similar advances in their academic achievement, referrals. and attendance at school. Students that failed to receive this support from their parents did not progress as well.

Witt (1983) said that the application of a form of "passive" behavioral intervention, which operates under the premise that behavior and academic performance are highly related, i.e., changes on one dimension are likely to be characterized by corresponding changes on the other dimension. There is agreement in Witt's findings and the results of the SHARP program.

The use of a token economy system such a Golub and Sweeney (1981) used in their study was employed in the SHARP program. The effectiveness of such a system was evident in the students progress, attitudes, and socialization. Golub and Sweeney stressed the point that the emphasis of their study was on academic performance and not on disruptive behavior. They felt evidence has shown that decreasing disruptive behavior does not necessarily improve academic achievement.

It appears that more research is necessary to determine whether improved behavior influences academic performance or if improved academic performance influences improved

behavior. This author feels that a child must experience a growth in both, behavior and academics, to develop a positive self-image and realize self-actualization.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are presented to make the SHARP program more effective:

1. The program should be initiated at the beginning of the school year, not in the 3rd or 4th quarter, to realize its full benefit.
2. The parents of student participants should be notified of their child's assignment to the SHARP class prior to the first day of school, and requested to attend the parent meeting. Follow-up contact, either by phone or in person, with those parents that do not attend.

Dissemination

Plans to disseminate this practicum include a presentation at the Florida Council of the Social Studies conference to be held in Cocoa Beach, Florida, on October 16, 1987. In addition, it will be offered to the Director of Student Services, the School Board of Broward County, for implementation in the county Dropout Prevention Program. Lastly, it will be submitted for consideration to be included in ERIC.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

STUDENT HELP AND REINFORCEMENT PROGRAM (SHARP)
MIDDLE SCHOOL SURVEY

Please circle "Y" for yes or "N" for no.

1.	Do you have disruptive students attending your school?	Y	N
2.	Do you have disinterested students attending your school?	Y	N
3.	Do you have low academic achieving students attending your school?	Y	N
4.	Do you have an alternative education program at your school?	Y	N
5.	Are the parents of this caliber of student supportive of the alternative program?	Y	N
6.	Are the parents of this caliber of student supportive of the children?	Y	N
7.	Are the parents of this caliber of student cooperative with the efforts of the school?	Y	N
8.	Do the parents of this caliber of student get involved in the school program?	Y	N
9.	Are these children below level readers?	Y	N
10.	Do teachers find it difficult to motivate this caliber of student to learn?	Y	N
11.	Do these children have a high rate of absenteeism?	Y	N
12.	Do these children receive more referrals than the average student?	Y	N
13.	Are these children suspended from school more frequently than the average student?	Y	N
14.	Are these children involved in more fights than the average student?	Y	N

15. Are all of these children from the lower socio-economic strata? Y N

16. Can more be done to help this caliber of student? Y N

17. Do you think that it might help to include in the schedule of these children an enrichment class designed to improve behavior? Y N

18. Do you feel that this caliber of student can be identified as a potential drop-out? Y N

19. Do you feel that the county drop-out rate is increasing? Y N

20. Is it too late to try to change this type of student in the middle school? Y N

21. Would it be better to initiate corrective action in the elementary grades? Y N

22. Would First Grade be too early to implement a corrective program? Y N

23. Does this caliber of student cause an additional expense to the educational community? Y N

24. Does this type of student have good parent child relationships? Y N

25. Does this type of student have good peer relationships? Y N

26. Is the issue of disinterested, disruptive, and low academic achieving students a county-wide problem? Y N

APPENDIX B

UNPREDICTED PHENOMENON

DATE	EVENT	EFFECT

APPENDIX C

STUDENT HELP AND REINFORCEMENT PROGRAM (SHARP) TREATMENT CONTRACT

I. Each group member agrees to:

A. Attend each session. In return, he/she will receive 1/2 token per meeting attended (total possible two and one half tokens per week).

B. Arrive for each session on time. In return, he/she will receive 1/2 token per on-time arrival, as evidenced by the door to the group meeting room being open, or a pass is presented, (total possible two and one half tokens per week).

C. Show evidence of assignment completion, (one each week). In return, he/she will receive:
   a. Five tokens for 100 percent completion (total possible five tokens per week).
   b. Persons completing part of their assignment will receive that percentage of five tokens for each part completed, and
   c. Priority to work on their problems during the group meeting.

D. Tokens are to be accumulated throughout the program and may be used for both redemption methods and rewards herewith described:
   a. Weekly redemptions on Fridays:
      (1). Ten tokens = A SUPER SHARP student:
         (a). _____
         _____
         _____
         _____

      (2). Eight-Nine tokens = A VERY SHARP student:
         _____
         _____
         _____
         _____

      (3). Six-Seven tokens = A SHARP student:
         _____
         _____

      (4). Zero-Five tokens = A NOT SO SHARP student: Needs more help. Tokens are not redeemable this week, but can be used for the end of program redemption.

(5). BONUS REWARD = A SUPER SHARP GROUP:
If all of the group members accumulate eight to ten tokens during the week, they will receive:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

b. Completion of the program redemptions.

(1). ___-___ tokens = _____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

(2). ___-___ tokens = _____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

(3). ___-___ tokens = _____
_____

(4). 0-___ tokens = Not acceptable performance or improvement on the part of the group member.

II. The group parents agree to:

A. Work with the group leader and to follow through on recommendations that may from time to time be be offered.

B. Equally support the group member in his/her efforts to change behavioral patterns, and to improve academic achievement.

C. Develop a reward system for good behavior and academic performance, such as praise, recognition, participation, opportunity to assume greater responsibilities, and with favorite foods and activities.

D. Develop a consequence system when poor behavior is displayed, such as, removal of certain privileges for a specified amount of time, or the removal of favorite foods and activities for a specified amount of time.

E. Implement either the reward or consequence as soon as possible after the behavior has been observed.

F. Develop a "Home Contingency Contract" with the group member stating the purpose, goals, what behavior is expected, the rewards, the consequences, and how long the contract is to run before it is reviewed and renewed. Approximately two weeks is a good guide for contract reviews. The group member should be a participant in developing this contract.

G. Provide the group leader with a copy of the "Home Contingency Contract."

H. To ask for and sign the Daily Report Card. Provide the group member a quiet place, free from distractions, and at a regular time, to complete his or her homework assignments. Ask for and sign the Homework Record for each subject to indicate that the assignment had been completed. These items must be returned to the group leader on the next school day, otherwise, he/she will be penalized one token for each missing item.

I. Attend group member functions when possible.

J. Allow data accumulated during the group to be used for research and/or educational purposes, with protection of confidentiality assured; and to allow the group leader of the therapy program to contact him/her in the future, by mail or phone, for follow-up.

III. The group leader agrees to:

A. Begin and end each session on time.

B. Help members clarify their problems in such a way that something can be done about them.

C. Help members identify their personal and other resources, and make use of them in dealing with their problems.

D. Provide members with the procedures that offer the best chance of an effective and efficient resolution of the problem.

E. Respect confidentiality of members' communication.

F. Provide tokens and rewards under conditions outlined above.

Group Member	Date
Group Parent Member	Date
Group Leader	Date

Parent will please keep one copy of this contract.

APPENDIX D

HOME CONTINGENCY CONTRACT

STUDENT HELP AND REINFORCEMENT PROGRAM (SHARP)
HOME CONTINGENCY CONTRACT

This contract is designed to develop a positive action plan between the group member and the parent/guardian of the group member. Both parties should be participants in drawing up the contract inclusions, and agree upon a review/ renewal date. After both parties are in complete agreement with the provisions they are to sign it and return one copy to the group leader.

Purpose: (Why are we making this contract?)

Goals: (What do we expect to be accomplished?)

What the group member will do.

In return, the parent/guardian will do.

Sig. Group Member _____ Date _____ Sig. Parent/Guardian _____ Date _____

Agreed upon review/renewal date:_____

APPENDIX E

SHARP DAILY REPORT CARD

STUDENT:_____ DATE:_____

TEACHERS: Please circle "Y" for yes and "N" for no.

	SOC. STU.		SCI.		MATH		ENG.		READ.	
Out of seat without permission	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
Calling out or excessive talking	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
Completes classroom assignments	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
Fighting	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
Late to class	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
Chewing gum or eating something	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
Nr. of Detentions										
Nr. of Referrals										
Academic letter grade would have earned.										
Behavior letter grade would have earned.										

This form is to be returned to the group leader, after it has been signed by the parent/guardian, before 1st period the next school day.

_____

Parent/Guardian Signature

APPENDIX F

SHARP STUDENTS 80
DAILY HOMEWORK RECORD

NAME:_____ Date:_____

SHARP students are required to write out their homework assignments on this form for each subject. If no assignment is given, the student will write "No Homework" for that subject. Before leaving class the student will have the teacher check it over, whether an assignment was given or not. The teacher will initial to indicate that the entry is correct. SHARP students will have their parents/guardian sign the homework record to indicate that the assignment has been completed. SHARP students will return their homework record to the group leader before the 1st period of the next school day, at which time a new homework record form will be given.

SOCIAL STUDIES:

_____ _____
TEACHER PARENT/GUARDIAN

SCIENCE:

_____ _____
TEACHER PARENT/GUARDIAN

MATH:

_____ _____
TEACHER PARENT/GUARDIAN

ENGLISH:

_____ _____
TEACHER PARENT/GUARDIAN

READING:

_____ _____
TEACHER PARENT/GUARDIAN

APPENDIX G

SHARP OBSERVATION FORM
TEACHER INPUT

1st Observation Date:_____ 2nd Observation Date:_____

Observer:_____ Period:_____

Subject:_____

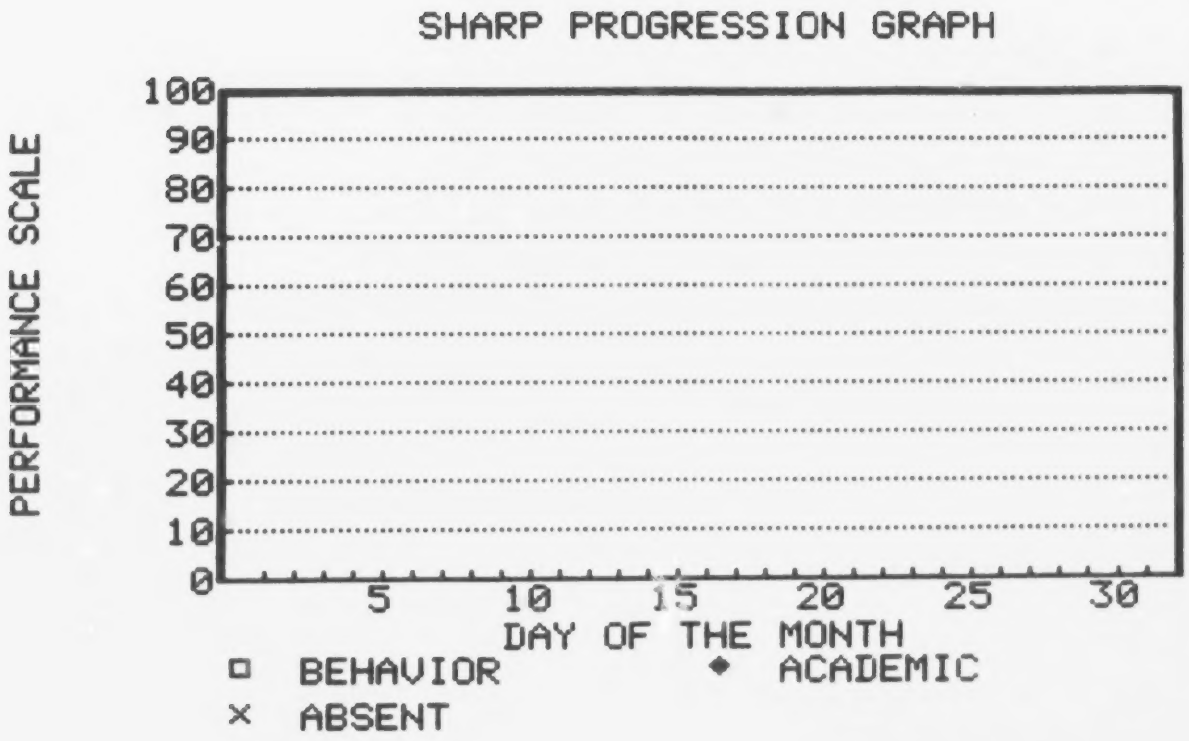
Student:_____

Your cooperation in recording with a (I) each time one of the criteria as presented on this form occurs would be appreciated. It is requested that two observations be made. (e.g. Week 1: Monday, 1st Period/Week 2: Monday, 1st Period) After the second observation, please return the form to the office of the Principal. Thank you for your assistance in developing a baseline for this child during your very busy schedule.

	DAY 1	DAY 2	COMMENTS
Out of seat without permission			
Calling out or excessive talking			
Refusal to begin or complete the task			
Fighting			
Late to class			
Chewing gum or eating something			
Detention			
Referral			
Academic letter grade would have earned.			
Behavior letter grade would have earned.			

Numerical equivalent will be used for statistical purposes. Use plus or minus signs if necessary.

APPENDIX H


SHARP PROGRESSION GRAPH
PERFORMANCE SCALE
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
5
10
15
20
25
30
DAY OF THE MONTH
BEHAVIOR
ACADEMIC
ABSENT

APPENDIX I

SHARP ADMINISTRATORS DAILY REPORT
REFERRALS, DETENTIONS, AND SUSPENSIONS

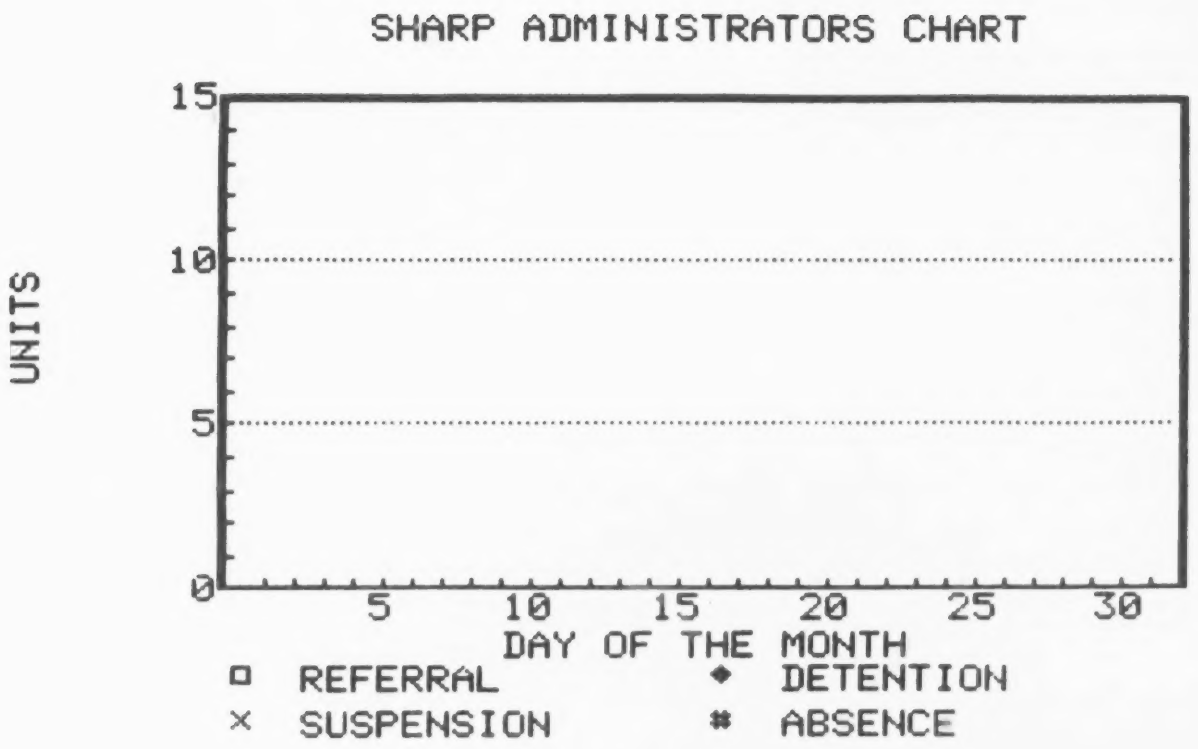
ADMINISTRATOR:_____

DATE:_____

The following students are assigned to the Student Help And Reinforcement Program (SHARP). Your cooperation in keeping a daily record about the number of referrals you receive on these students, the number of administrative detentions given to each student, and the number of days suspension as a result of the referrals received, would be appreciated.

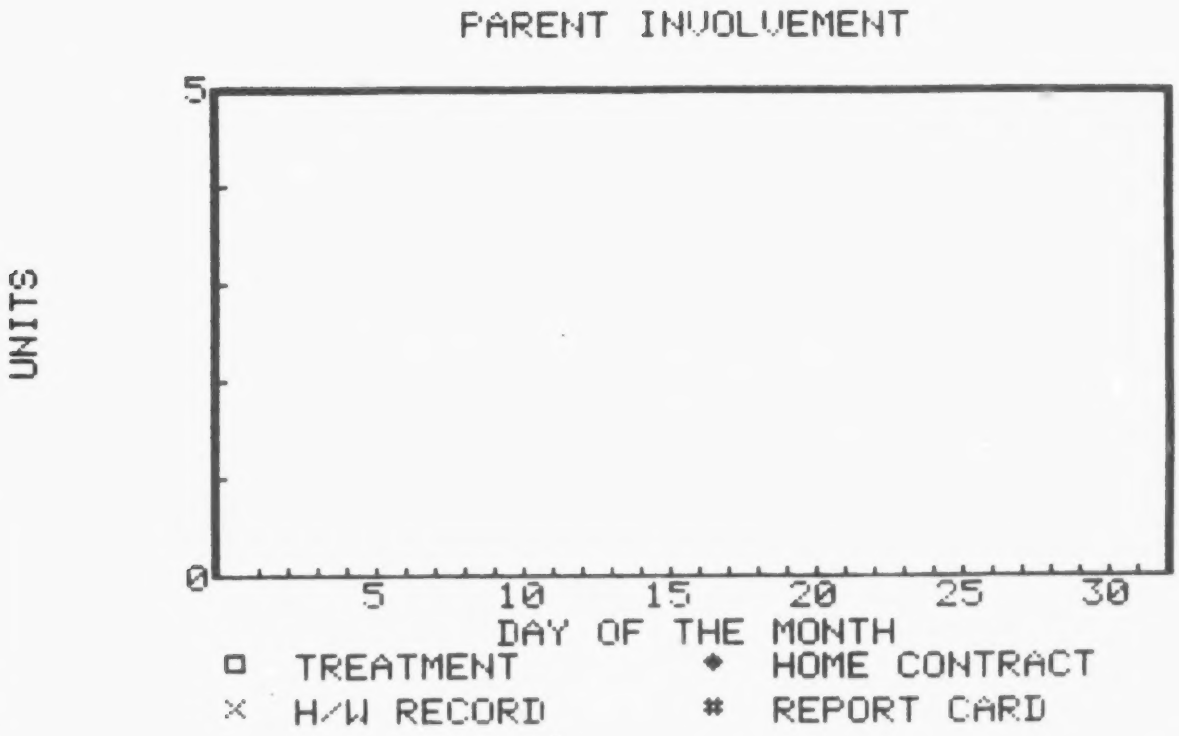
STUDENT	REFERRALS	DETENTIONS	SUSPENSIONS
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			

APPENDIX J


SHARP ADMINISTRATORS CHART
UNITS
15
10
5
0
5
10
15
20
25
30
DAY OF THE MONTH
REFERRAL
DETENTION
SUSPENSION
ABSENCE

APPENDIX K

WEEKLY SHARP PARENT INVOLVEMENT GRAPH



free time activities

You can earn "Free Time" tickets for the following activities by: (Specify here the criteria to be met.)

1. (Menu List Follows.) _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Permission granted by Lee Canter & Associates.

SUGGESTED REWARDS

1. Library Time
2. Academic Games
3. Puzzles
4. Teacher's Aide
5. Computer Time
6. Special Projects (Art, Subject, School)
7. Playing Cards
8. Office Aide
9. Pencils, Stickers, Badges
10. Article Published in the School Paper
11. Certificates
12. Letters to Parents
13. Group Field Day (Outdoor Sports & Games)
14. Group Picnics
15. Library Aide
16. No Cost Field Trips
17. Cafeteria Aide
18. Custodial Aide
19. Choice of Reading (Magazines, Comics, and Books)
20. Extra Credit Assignment

FREE TIME PASS

_____

HAS EARNED _____ MINUTES

OF FREE TIME

FREE TIME PASS

_____

HAS EARNED _____ MINUTES

OF FREE TIME

FREE TIME PASS

_____

HAS EARNED _____ MINUTES

OF FREE TIME

FREE TIME PASS

_____

HAS EARNED _____ MINUTES

OF FREE TIME

FREE TIME PASS

_____

HAS EARNED _____ MINUTES

OF FREE TIME

FREE TIME PASS

_____

HAS EARNED _____ MINUTES

OF FREE TIME

FREE TIME PASS

_____

HAS EARNED _____ MINUTES

OF FREE TIME

FREE TIME PASS

_____

HAS EARNED _____ MINUTES

OF FREE TIME

FREE TIME PASS

_____

HAS EARNED _____ MINUTES

OF FREE TIME

Permission granted by Lee Canter & Associates.

This ticket good for ONE grab in the grab bag

This ticket good for ONE grab in the grab bag

This ticket good for ONE grab in the grab bag

This ticket good for ONE grab in the grab bag

This ticket good for ONE grab in the grab bag

This ticket good for ONE grab in the grab bag

This ticket good for ONE grab in the grab bag

This ticket good for ONE grab in the grab bag

This ticket good for ONE grab in the grab bag

This ticket good for ONE grab in the grab bag

Permission granted by Lee Canter & Associates.

OBJECTIVE-INSTRUMENT-CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS CHART

OBJECTIVE:

9 out of 15 subjects assigned to this program will demonstrate improved behavior.

INSTRUMENT:

SHARP Teacher Observation In-put daily behavioral grade will be used to develop an average base-line teacher grade from ten observations.

SHARP Daily Report Card will be used to obtain daily behavioral grades after the treatment has started.

SHARP Students Progression Graph will be used to record the base-line and teacher reported daily behavioral grades.

CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS:

The subjects must improve their behavior rating from the base-line level by one letter grade.

OBJECTIVE:

9 out of 15 subjects assigned to this program will show an improvement in their academic achievement.

INSTRUMENT:

SHARP Teacher Observation In-put daily academic grade will be used to develop an average base-line teacher grade from ten observations.

SHARP Daily Report Card will be used to obtain daily academic grades after treatment has started.

SHARP Students Progression Graph will be used to record the base-line and teacher reported daily academic grades. SHARP Students Homework Record is a support instrument designed to foster student responsibility and parental involvement.

CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS:

The subjects must improve their academic rating from the base-line level by one letter grade.

OBJECTIVE:

10 out of 15 subjects assigned to this program will show a decline in the number of referrals that result in suspension.

INSTRUMENT:

SHARP Administrators Daily Report on Referrals, Detentions and Suspensions will be used to develop an average administrators base-line from a ten day reporting period. SHARP Administrators Chart will be used to record the number of administrative encounters for each subject.

CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS:

Over the entire implementation period the subjects must show a zero encounter rating or five less than during base line.

OBJECTIVE:

10 out of 15 subjects assigned to this program will improve their school attendance.

INSTRUMENT:

Teacher attendance records will be used to support SHARP forms.

SHARP Student Progression Graph will be used to record the days absent during the base-line period and after treatment has started.

CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS:

Over the entire implementation period the subjects must show a zero absentee rating or five less than base-line.

OBJECTIVE:

That at least one parent from 8 of the subjects assigned to this program will become actively involved with and supportive of the program and their child.

INSTRUMENT:

SHARP Treatment Contract will be used to establish a school-based reinforcement system, and a working agreement between the school, student, and the parent. All of the concerned parties must sign the contract. The rewards and the system remain the same for all of the subjects in the program. This contract is designed to promote

parental involvement, and subject motivation.

SHARP Home Contingency Contract will be used to promote parental involvement, establish a home-based reinforcement system, and improve parent/child and parent/school relationships.

SHARP Homework Record must be signed by the parent to indicate that the subject has completed the homework assignment.

SHARP Daily Report Card must be signed by the parent to indicate awareness of the subject's progress.

SHARP Weekly Parent Involvement Graph will be used to record the number of times the parent has signed the daily report card and the daily homework record, attended meetings and school conferences, and has on file a signed home contingency contract and/or a treatment contract.

CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS:

The involved parent must have completed the following:

1. A signed treatment contract on file.
2. A signed home contingency contract on file.
3. Attended all scheduled meetings and conferences.
4. On a weekly basis, signed 4 out of 5 daily report cards.
5. On a weekly basis, signed 4 out of 5 daily homework record forms.

APPENDIX O

EARN A SHARPBUCK

This is an ongoing activity that begins as soon as you are familiar with each child's level of functioning in academic tasks.

The teacher will be the bank auditor and review the deposits that students make to their accounts. One student each week will be selected to be the banker until everyone has had a chance to fill this position.

The banker will record the daily tokens that students earn on a bank deposit slip. Each student will initial next to their name to indicate that the entry is correct. If a student is either absent or did not receive any pay for that day, the banker will enter "NONE" and sign the entry.

At the end of each week the banker will prepare a bank statement, audited by the teacher, and give each student his or her statement of account.

Once a month the SHARPVILLE General Store is open for the entire class period. Students can go to the banker and get a purchase order which has the amount of SHARPBUCKS that the student can spend.

The position of storekeeper and clerk is rotated among

the students each month. After a sale is made the storekeeper writes the amount of purchase on the purchase order and subtracts it from the authorized figure. The buyer returns to the bank with the purchase order to see the banker, who inturn, records on the bank books the amount spent and the customers current balance. There is no credit or lay-a-way in this activity.

Some items in the store are:

Free time slips	Bookmarkers	Comic Books
Barrettes	Cookies	Party Favors
Old jewelry	Small Bars of soap	Games
Puzzles	Hand lotion	Pencils